

In 2015, São Tomé and Príncipe made a minimal advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The Government assessed the impact of a social program on eliminating and preventing child labor. However, children in São Tomé and Príncipe are engaged in child labor, including in domestic work and street work. The types of hazardous work prohibited for children are not comprehensive, and social programs do not target every sector in which children work. Law enforcement agencies lack sufficient resources to adequately enforce child labor laws.



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I. PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Children in São Tomé and Príncipe are engaged in child labor, including in domestic work and street work.(1-5) Results from a 2014 study conducted by the Government and ILO indicate that 8 percent of children between the ages of 10 and 17 work; however, the study results have not been made publicly available.(6, 7) Table 1 provides key indicators on children's work and education in São Tomé and Príncipe.

Table 1. Statistics on Children's Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent
Working (% and population)	5-14 yrs.	15.4 (6,218)
Attending School (%)	5-14 yrs.	68.8
Combining Work and School (%)	7-14 yrs.	13.7
Primary Completion Rate (%)		92.4

Source for primary completion rate: Data from 2015, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2015.(8)

Source for all other data: Understanding Children's Work Project's analysis of statistics from Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2, 2000.(9)

Based on a review of available information, Table 2 provides an overview of children's work by sector and activity.

Table 2. Overview of Children's Work by Sector and Activity

Sector/Industry	Activity
Agriculture	Farming,* activities unknown (1, 4, 5)
	Fishing,* activities unknown (1)
Industry	Carpentry* and woodworking* (1, 10)
Services	Domestic work (1, 4, 5)
	Working in shops* (5)
	Street work, including begging* and selling goods (1, 2, 4, 10)
Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor†	Commercial sexual exploitation* (11)

* Evidence of this activity is limited and/or the extent of the problem is unknown.

† Child labor understood as the worst forms of child labor *per se* under Article 3(a)–(c) of ILO C. 182.

On the island of São Tomé, some families engage in a cultural practice known as *Mina Quia*, in which children perform domestic activities including washing clothes, cooking, and childcare in the home of another family.(1) Some children are permitted to attend school if they can also conduct their domestic duties. Limited evidence suggests that many children who work in *Mina Quia* are victims of sexual abuse and domestic violence.(1)

There is a high loss of students between the first (first through fourth grades) and second levels (fifth and sixth grades) of primary education. Evidence indicates that additional costs and a lack of schools that offer fifth and sixth grades are barriers to accessing education.(2, 11, 12)




II. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

São Tomé and Príncipe has ratified most key international conventions concerning child labor (Table 3).

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Table 3. Ratification of International Conventions on Child Labor

Convention	Ratification
 ILO C. 138, Minimum Age	✓
ILO C. 182, Worst Forms of Child Labor	✓
 UN CRC	✓
UN CRC Optional Protocol on Armed Conflict	
UN CRC Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography	
 Palermo Protocol on Trafficking in Persons	✓

The Government has established laws and regulations related to child labor, including its worst forms (Table 4).

Table 4. Laws and Regulations Related to Child Labor

Standard	Yes/No	Age	Related Legislation
Minimum Age for Work	Yes	14	Article 128 of the Legal Regime of Individual Employment Conditions (13)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	Yes	18	Article 129 of the Legal Regime of Individual Employment Conditions (13)
Prohibition of Hazardous Occupations or Activities for Children	Yes		Articles 129 and 134 of the Legal Regime of Individual Employment Conditions (13)
Prohibition of Forced Labor	Yes		Articles 159, 160, and 181 of the Penal Code (14)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	Yes		Articles 160 and 181 of the Penal Code (14)
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	Yes		Articles 179–182 of the Penal Code (14)
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	Yes		Articles 279, 280, and 289 of the Penal Code (14)
Minimum Age for Compulsory Military Recruitment	Yes	18	<i>Legislation title unknown</i> (15, 16)
Minimum Age for Voluntary Military Service	Yes	17	<i>Legislation title unknown</i> (15, 16)
Compulsory Education Age	Yes	12‡	Article 6 (1) of the Basic Education System Law (17, 18)
Free Public Education	Yes		Article 55 of the Constitution; Article 6(1) of the Basic Education System Law (18, 19)

‡ Age calculated based on available information (17, 18)

The law's minimum age protections do not apply to children working outside of a formal labor relationship, such as children who are self-employed.(13, 17)

The Legal Regime of Individual Employment Conditions prohibits children under age 18 from engaging in heavy work carried out in unhealthy or dangerous conditions. It also prohibits underground and night work; however, the types of hazardous work prohibited for children do not cover street work, an unhealthy environment that exposes children to hazardous substances, agents, or processes.(13) In 2014, the Government completed a draft list of hazardous activities for children and submitted it to the National Assembly for review; the list awaits final approval.(7, 20)

The Basic Education System Law establishes a mandatory 6 years of free primary education, which may be completed as early as age 12.(17, 18) Children who stop attending school before reaching the minimum age for employment are especially vulnerable to the worst forms of child labor because they are not in school, but they also may not legally work.

III. ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

The Government has established institutional mechanisms for the enforcement of laws and regulations on child labor, including its

worst forms (Table 5).

Table 5. Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Organization/Agency	Role
Department of Labor Inspection, Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs	Enforce labor laws, including child labor.(7) Use small ad hoc teams to investigate labor exploitation cases; teams include Labor Inspection and other government agencies, including immigration officials, police officers, tax administrators, social workers, and Social Security Administration staff.(3, 21)
Prosecutor's Office and Criminal Investigative Police, Ministry of Justice and Human Rights	Enforce criminal laws against the worst forms of child labor.(7, 21)

Labor Law Enforcement

In 2015, labor law enforcement agencies in São Tomé and Príncipe took actions to combat child labor, including its worst forms (Table 6).

Table 6. Labor Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor

Overview of Labor Law Enforcement	2014	2015
Labor Inspectorate Funding	\$16,000 (7)	Unknown
Number of Labor Inspectors	15 (7)	13 (5)
Inspectorate Authorized to Assess Penalties	Unknown	No (5)
Training for Labor Inspectors		
■ Initial Training for New Employees	Unknown	Unknown
■ Training on New Laws Related to Child Labor	N/A	N/A
■ Refresher Courses Provided	Unknown	Yes (5)
Number of Labor Inspections	Unknown	70 (5)
■ Number Conducted at Worksite	Unknown	Unknown
■ Number Conducted by Desk Reviews	Unknown	Unknown
Number of Child Labor Violations Found	Unknown	Unknown
Number of Child Labor Violations for Which Penalties Were Imposed	Unknown	0 (5)
■ Number of Penalties Imposed That Were Collected	Unknown	N/A
Routine Inspections Conducted	Unknown	Yes (5)
■ Routine Inspections Targeted	Unknown	Unknown
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes (7)	Yes (5)
Unannounced Inspections Conducted	Unknown	Unknown
Complaint Mechanism Exists	Unknown	Yes (5)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Labor Authorities and Social Services	Yes (7, 21)	Yes (5)

In 2015, the Department of Labor Inspection received insufficient funding. According to the Government, the number of inspectors is inadequate to deal with potential labor violations in São Tomé and Príncipe.(5)

During the reporting period, the Department of Labor Inspection received two child labor complaints; one of these cases was referred to the Prosecutor's Office for investigation.(5)

Children found by the Department of Labor Inspection are referred to the Department of Social Services in the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs for counseling and integration into recreational and educational activities.(5, 7, 21)

Criminal Law Enforcement

In 2015, criminal law enforcement agencies in São Tomé and Príncipe took actions to combat the worst forms of child labor (Table 7).

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Table 7. Criminal Law Enforcement Efforts Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor

Overview of Criminal Law Enforcement	2014	2015
Training for Investigators		
■ Initial Training for New Employees	Unknown	Unknown
■ Training on New Laws Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor	N/A	N/A
■ Refresher Courses Provided	Unknown	Unknown
Number of Investigations	0 (7)	1 (5)
Number of Violations Found	Unknown	Unknown
Number of Prosecutions Initiated	0 (7)	0 (5)
Number of Convictions	Unknown	0 (5)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Criminal Authorities and Social Services	Yes (7, 21)	Yes (5)

Ministry of Justice and Human Rights officials can refer child victims to the Department of Social Services in the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs for counseling and integration into recreational and educational activities.(5, 7, 21)

IV. COORDINATION OF GOVERNMENT EFFORTS ON THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

The Government has established mechanisms to coordinate its efforts to address child labor, including its worst forms (Table 8).

Table 8. Mechanisms to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor

Coordinating Body	Role & Description
Anti-Child Labor Committee	Raise awareness to eliminate the worst forms of child labor by 2016 and all forms of child labor by 2020.(20) Representatives include government institutions, ILO, NGOs, labor unions, the Chamber of Commerce, and UNICEF.(7) In March 2015, the Committee conducted a child labor awareness-raising campaign with primary school children in Mé-Zóchi and Água Grande districts.(22)
Department of Social Protection and Solidarity, Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs	Carry out support programs for families to ensure children attend school. Administer the Social Integration Assistance program, which provides funds to the Disadvantaged Mothers program (<i>Mães Carenciadas</i>). ⁽¹⁾

V. GOVERNMENT POLICIES ON THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

The Government of São Tomé and Príncipe has established policies related to child labor, including its worst forms (Table 9).

Table 9. Policies Related to Child Labor

Policy	Description
National Poverty Reduction Strategy (2012–2016)	Outlines social protection strategies to combat child labor and commercial sexual exploitation of children. Aims to ensure that all children complete basic education by 2016.(23)
National Plan for Education (2002–2015)*	Aims to provide free basic education to all children. States that education is free and compulsory for 6 years.(24)

* Child labor elimination and prevention strategies do not appear to have been integrated into this policy.

The draft National Action Plan on Child Labor, including the list of hazardous activities for children, was finalized in 2014 and is awaiting final approval.(5)

VI. SOCIAL PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS CHILD LABOR

In 2015, the Government of São Tomé and Príncipe participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor, including its worst forms (Table 10).

Table 10. Social Programs to Address Child Labor

Program	Description
Decent Work Country Program (2013–2016)	Government program, in collaboration with the ILO, which prioritizes the promotion of decent employment, especially for young people. Aims to eliminate child labor, particularly the worst forms of child labor, through legislative action and strategic programs.(25)

Table 10. Social Programs to Address Child Labor

Program	Description
Support Centers†	Government-funded centers, run by NGOs with social work staff for approximately 210 orphans and at-risk children.(5, 7) Three centers operate in areas with high concentrations of poor families, orphans, and street children. Work with parents of at-risk children, provide stipends to families to keep children in school, and teach income-generating skills to children.(5)
Disadvantaged Mothers Program (<i>Mães Carenciadas</i>)†	Government program that provides funds to female-led households to encourage basic education for children. Scholarships are given to children from low-income households to assist in continuing their studies.(1)
XIV Government Program (<i>Programa do XIV Governo</i>)†	Government program that seeks to improve the quality of education by providing infrastructure, educational opportunities, and technical and professional training for students in primary and secondary education.(1)

† Program is funded by the Government of São Tomé and Príncipe.

In 2015, the Government, in consultation with the ILO, completed a study to assess the impact of the 2014 Workshops for Awareness of the Worst Forms of Child Labor.(5)

Research found no evidence of programs designed to specifically address children engaged in domestic work and street work in São Tomé and Príncipe.

VII. SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

Based on the reporting above, suggested actions are identified that would advance the elimination of child labor, including its worst forms, in São Tomé and Príncipe (Table 11).

Table 11. Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor, Including its Worst Forms

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Legal Framework	Ratify the UN CRC Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution, and Child Pornography.	2014 – 2015
	Ensure that all children are protected by law, including children who are self-employed.	2015
	Ensure that the types of hazardous work prohibited for children are comprehensive.	2009 – 2015
	Establish a compulsory education age that is equal to or higher than the minimum age for employment.	2014 – 2015
Enforcement	Make information publicly available regarding the labor inspectorate's funding, training for law enforcement officials, type of labor inspections conducted, as well as the number of child labor violations found during inspections and investigations.	2014 – 2015
	Authorize the inspectorate to assess penalties.	2015
	Allocate sufficient funding to the Department of Labor Inspection and Ministry of Justice and Human Rights to ensure that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The number of labor inspectors is sufficient. ■ Inspectors and investigators receive adequate training. ■ Labor inspectors have the necessary equipment and resources to conduct inspections. ■ Proactive child labor inspections are conducted, even in the absence of reported cases. 	2009 – 2015
Government Policies	Integrate child labor elimination and prevention strategies into the National Plan for Education.	2014 – 2015
Social Programs	Make the results of the child labor study publicly available, and if necessary, conduct research to determine the activities carried out by children working in agriculture to inform policies and programs.	2015
	Expand existing education programs, and increase the number of schools that offer fifth and sixth grades to ensure that all children have access to basic education.	2010 – 2015
	Implement programs that specifically target children engaged in domestic work and street work.	2009 – 2015

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9. UCW. *Analysis of Child Economic Activity and School Attendance Statistics from National Household or Child Labor Surveys*. Original data from Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2, 2000. Analysis received December 18, 2015. Reliable statistical data on the worst forms of child labor are especially difficult to collect given the often hidden or illegal nature of the worst forms. As a result, statistics on children's work in general are reported in this chart, which may or may not include the worst forms of child labor. For more information on sources used, the definition of working children and other indicators used in this report, please see the "Children's Work and Education Statistics: Sources and Definitions" section of this report.
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